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American art association.
Exhibition of oil paintings and water colors by J. Rollin Tilton.
N.Y.,1880.

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EXHIBITION

OF

Oil Paintings

AND

Water Colors

BY

J. ROLLIN TILTON, M.A.,

OF ROME.

AT

THE AMERICAN ART GALLERY,

MADISON SQUARE, NEW YORK.

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INTRODUCTION.

The historic landscape will ever be interesting, uniting, as it may, the feelings that belong to purely imaginative work, with the associations connected with famous places and memorable events. Mr. Tilton has traveled far to collect the material for the brilliant and fascinating impressions which animate his work. Italy is made to yield her store; and inexhaustible Venice again pours her enchantment around us. Spain, Egypt, the Alps are laid under contribution.

There are many ways of looking at Nature. Each artist has his own. We are charmed with this radiant sphere which seems to move with the painter, and to give him inspiration wherever he goes. He commands space and lives in color. The gray, the quiet, the green spaces; the simple air, familiar through every day, afford quite as intense an inspiration to those who feel them keenly. Turner hurried off into space; so will

many a man who kindles at distance, aerial gradation, luminous farness, suggestion and mystery. Turner hardly recorded, he emblazoned. These two ways of looking at nature are like different kinds of poetry, each founded in truth: moods of minds and passionate feeling. Modern work turns to detail and investigation, as science does. We may say nature has never been discovered till to-day. All things have significance if only the hand transmutes them that can. Rembrandt turned roughness and hideousness to poetry. Art is a magician.

Mr. Tilton retains the classic mood, and puts into it a method and fineness of his own. He feels the prismatic effects. His compositions leave the mind filled with repose, yet stirred with the poetry of the subject, and the art which handles them. They are subdued in composition, tender and penetrating in feeling, earnest in poetry in various keys. Morning and evening appeal to us, and the water gleams through the tranquil spaces, and hills and towers fade into dateless blue. His works are not panoramic, and the gradations are subtle, ethereal and living.

Rome will still appeal to this feeling. If ever epic landscape should survive it would be there.

The memorable scene ever unfolded before the eye; the contagion of the history; the grandeur of the parts; the inspiration of the incentive to do something worthy to record one's impressions, have stimulated the artist's most exhaustive work. Rome from the Aventine is seen in all its memorable aspect. One cannot do better than to quote the words of the *London Times* in its enthusiastic description of this picture.* People will wander in Egypt or Italy—as they may—in the memory if they have been there; or in imagination, with the artist's interpretation of characteristic and memorable scenes, if they have not. Everywhere the eye is soothed and set wandering in space. The miracle of Venice starts above the water in its thousand phases of light and color, atmosphere perspective, and dream-like glory. One must surrender to the fascination of its poetry which is written on the water like enchantment, and stretches to the sky.

But attention should be drawn to the faithfulness of these studies; the sobriety of feeling which will not yield to a glamor which exaggerates; or to a scenic effect which cheapens what it cannot reproduce. They are sincerely done. Sympa-

* See Appendix.

thetic with the spirit of the scenes they interpret, they lift them at once into a region of idealism and faithful delineation.

Residence in Rome kindles in the artist habits of glowing associations with places, with nature, and with man. The world's history unrolls there, and still is knit into human destiny. Here that sense is won which serves in other lands, and in other themes ; the historic sympathy, with ideal grace, which makes of old countries a poem, an incentive, a delight.

E. A. S.

OIL PAINTINGS.

1 Rome from the Aventine, in the convent ground of Santa Sabina, sloping to the open ground of Bocca della Veritá near the river bank. To the right, the Palatine and ruins of the palaces of the Cæsars. Up the Tiber three arches of the Ponte Rotto, the Ponte Quattro Capi, with the Tiberine island; and the arches and segments of arches joining it to the mainland; farther on the Ponte Sisto. To the left is Trastevere, San Pietro in Montorio, and the long ridge of Janiculum with the green fringe of Pamphili Doria.

In the distance the stream and the great mass of the Vatican and St. Peters crowning all.—Twilight.

2 Granada and the Alhambra as seen from the Vega—evening. In the center is the Vermilion

Tower built by the Phenicians ; crowning the summit of the hill behind, are the masses of the Alhambra. To the left, the del Moro, with the old quarter of the town, The white summits of the Sierra Nevada run toward the right, and carry the eye down to the El Ultimo Sospiro del Moro—the last sigh of the Moors.

3 Cairo : mosque and citadel, looking out over the valley of the Nile, with the pyramids and Libyan desert in the distance.

4 Temple of Minerva, island of Egina : morning—looking over the sea to the mainland. Said to be the earliest temple in Greece. Here were found the famous Townley marbles.

5 Tivoli, with the Campagna. Convent of Santa Anna, Temple of Vesta, falls, and the town to the left.

6 Venetian fishing boats, off Torcello—evening, full moon rising.

7 Acropolis of Athens : Town and temple of Theseus below. Pireus and the Egean islands in the distance.

8 Mount Soracte, from the valley of the Tiber.

9 Ronda, Spain. The key of Granada in the time of the Moors.

10 Cæsar Borgia's Castle, valley of the Tiber.

11 Lake Avernus: bay of Naples and Vesuvius in the distance.

12 Bay of Baie; temple of Venus and Citadel. The Sorrento range with Vesuvius in the distance.

13 San Giorgio, Venice. Island and convent. Evening.

14 Venetian fishing-boats off Murano.

15 The plain of Thebes. In the distance, the Nile, Luxor, Karnac; to the right, the Memnonium statues and temple; in the foreground, one of Belzoni's tombs.

16 Taormina, Sicily; Greek theatre in foreground looking over toward Etna; a sirocco day.

17 Torre delle Schiave; Roman Campagna; Monte Leonessa in the distance.

18 Guidecca, Venice, looking to the hills of Argua; sunset.

19 Temple of Jupiter Olympus, Greece; Pireus and islands in the distance.

ROOM OF EGYPTIAN WATER-COLORS.

1 Citadel of Cairo.

1 A. Study of Temples Medeemet-Haboo.

2 Old Cairo on the banks of the Nile. Street scene.

3 The Sphynx, showing the injuries received from Cambyses and the Mamelukes.

4 Market scene. Aboofeyda. Villagers crossing the Nile on their way to market.

5 Study of palm trees at Bibbeh. A village is hidden in the grove.

6 The mud town of Bibbeh, noted for its palms. Camels bringing down straw.

7 Girgeh. Mosques and town.

8 Temple of Memnonium.

9 Esne. A very picturesque town on the Nile.

10 Temple of Komombo. Built in the time of Cleopatra's mother.

11 Karnac. Avenue of sphynxs. One of the hundred gates of Thebes.

12 Hall of Osiris.

13 Komombo. Morning study.

14 Bazaar, Cairo.

15 Funeral scene at a mud town, with water carriers.

16 Esne. Café, minaret, and market scene. This is one of the most picturesque modern towns on the Nile. It is also famous for its Circassian slaves.

17 Market-day at Behnesa.

LARGE ROOM.

18 Morning study of Santa Maria del Orte. Venice.

19 Casa Tintoretto, fondamenta del Moro—Venice.

20 Venetian fishing-boats. Study of color.

21 San Michele. Venice.

22 Ducal palace. Venice, early morning.

23 Ponte Giustiniani. Venice.

24 Porta Storta. Venice.

25 Giudecca. Venice, morning.

26 Santa Maria della Salute and Dogana. Early morning.

27 San Giorgio. Venice.

28 Grand canal. Venice; early morning.

29 Study of Venetian color.

30 Canal with old bridge. Venice, study of.

30 *A*. Study of canal and tower of the Frari. Venice.

30 *B*. Study of group of piles on the lagoons. Venice.

30 *C*. Porta del Vino, Alhambra.

30 *D*. Torre del Infanta. Study in color.

30 *E*. Study of hall, looking into Court of Lions, Alhambra.

31 Study of dye-shop, Venice.

32 Tragetto. Venice.

33 Study of hay boat. Venice.

34 Chioggia. Fish market.

35 Study of boats on the lagoons. Venice.

36 Ducal palace and grand canal. Venice ; Early morning.

37 Bridge at Chioggia.

38 Fish market. Venice.

39 Santa Maria della Salute.

40 Porte Alto. Venice ; old bridge without parapet.

41 Anteleo, from the lagoons. Venice.

42 Church of the Lido. Venice; early morning.

43 Convent of the Lido. Venice; early morning.

44 Hay boat. Venice.

45 Group of Venetian fishing boats.

46 Scene on the Grand canal. Venice.

47 Fish market. Venice.

48 Ducal palace. Venice; early morning.

49 Giudecca. Venice.

50 Murano. Study of an old church.

51 Venetian fishing boats at anchor.

52 San Michele. Venice; evening.

53 San Pietro in Castello; the first church built in Venice, near the entrance to the arsenal.

54 San Giorgio. Venice; evening.

55 Bridge of Sighs. Venice; early morning.

56 Study of Venetian fishing boats.

57 Study of color on the Grand canal.

58 San Giacomo. Venice.

59 Study of boats. San Giorgio in Velatro in the distance.

60 Venetian fishing boats.

61 Study of boats.

62 Group of harbor piles in the lagoon.

63 Study of boats. Venice.

64 Study of a boat. Venice.

65 Assisi. The Duomo, a study; evening.

66 Assisi. Church of Saint Francis; a study; early morning.

67 Gate of San Giacomo. Assisi.

68 Morning study at Assisi.

69 San Giorgio. Venice.

70 Towers and plain of Assisi with Perugia in the distance.

71 Convent of San Bernardo, Perugia.

72 Capuchin Convent at Perugia—Study.

73 Study of Olives in Blossom, Tivoli.

74 Tivoli, Convent of Santa Anna.

75 Olevano, with mountains beyond Palestrina.

76 Street Scene in Olevano near Casa Balbi.

77 San Rocco, Olevano. Morning study.

78 Hills and town of Tivoli, with ruins of ancient bridge.

79 Town and Castle of Olevano.

80 Study of the Serchio, Tuscany.

81 Study on the Lake of Como.

82 Study of Snow Mountains on the Lake of Como. Early morning.

83 Menaggio, Lake of Como, Sirocco Day.

84 Grand Canal, Venice.

85 Brunnen, Lake of Lucerne. Early morning.

86 Bay of Uri, Lake of Lucerne. Morning.

87 Pitz Languard, St. Moritz, Engadine, Switzerland.

88 Tower of Justice, Alhambra, Spain.

89 Sierra Nevada. Dawn.

90 Study in color of La Vega, Granada.

91 Alhambra, from the Sede del Moro.

92 El Ultimo Sospiro del Moro.

93 Tower della Cattiva, Alhambra.

94 Alhambra; morning.

95 Sede del Moro.

96 Moorish Mill; Granada.

97 Ronda; Evening; study of color.

98 Street of the Gypsies, Granada, with the Vermilion Tower.

99 Morning study of the Sierra Nevada, Granada.

100 The Vermilion Tower, Granada, with the distant view of the Ultimo Sospiro del Moro.

101 Study of Spanish color, Granada.

102 Almeria; early morning.

103 Gate of Justice; Alhambra.

104 Gate of Bobadil; Alhambra.

105 Old town of Granada; early morning.

106 Old fortifications of Ronda.

107 Vermilion Tower; Evening.

108 Study of the Parthenon; Evening.

109 Study of the Parthenon; Morning.

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APPENDIX.

ROME FROM THE AVENTINE.

(*From our special correspondent.*)

ROME, Jan. 1.

How many years must a man have lived in Rome before he can assert without boasting that he has thoroughly seen it? Can even the longest familiarity with every individual feature of the city give him the best idea of the general beauty of its majestic aspect? Will he, at least, be able to tell us from what spot the grandest and loveliest view of the place may be obtained? My answer is, Not till he has seen the place through another man's eyes as well as his own. I was the other day at the studio of a good old friend, of whom it would be difficult to say whether Rome or Art is the more constant object of his love and study. He was born on the other side of the Atlantic, among the orchards of New Hampshire, but he has studied life and nature in all countries, and his paintings of Naples and Venice, of Greece and Egypt, are as well known in Italy, in England, and all over Europe as they are in his own country. He is as much a painter and a Roman as his friend and countryman Story is a Roman and a sculptor, and, like Story, his home has been for many winters in the upper apartments of that Barberini Palace which, from its position, deserves the appellation of the Diadem of Rome. I think after that I scarcely need name Mr. Tilton.

I was, the other day, at his studio, on the way to the Porta Salara where, during several visits, I have seen the walls and towers of Cairo, with its boundless waste and its pyramids, take color and shape under his

life-giving brush. I frequently sit with him and listen to him, for there is much that is common in our experience of many lands, and there are not many subjects upon which his highly-cultivated mind is not as much at home as on the particular one on which his time and labor are chiefly bestowed. I had met him in the morning on the Pincio, and our conversation turned on the panorama of Rome one enjoys from its lofty terraces. He asked me whether I would like to see his picture of Rome from the Aventine—a picture, he said, which he had thought out for five and twenty years, and into which he has poured all the love which from his early years bound him to this city as the cradle of his second birth.

The picture was produced, and I saw what I had vainly longed for during many years—the City of the Tiber. From the terraces of the Pincio, from the Loggie of the Vatican, from the platform before the Church of San Pietro in Montorio, and from every variety of spot on the brim of this marvellous scallop-shell of a city, the traveler's gaze rests on a maze of multitudinous objects, not many of them recommendable on the score of external beauty, many of them hopelessly marred by the vile Jesuit taste under the influence of which they received their *baroque* finish, but so charming the eye by the haphazard confusion with which they are huddled together, by the contrast of their infinite splendor and squalor, by the swelling and sinking of the ground, and the hide-and-seek of their bewildering perspective, but, above all things, by the wooing tints which the light of Heaven showers lovingly upon them, that a glance at the scene is sufficient to satisfy us how it was that Nature intended Rome to be at all times the Paradise of the Imagination, while its priests have made for it so many centuries something worse than the Purgatory of Reason. In all these views, however, we have the play of *Hamlet* with Hamlet's part left out; the Tiber City without the Tiber; the magnificent saloon without the life-giving reflection of the magic looking-glass. In Mr. Tilton's grand picture alone, of all I have seen before, the Tiber is the main feature, and the artist has contrived to enthrone it on the foreground.

You stand on an elevated spot on the borderland between the Aventine and the vast enclosure of the Palaces of the Cæsars. At your feet, in a ragged olive-grove, and on a patch of rough, weedy turf, are the

fragments of the mosaic floor of some vanished Roman temple ; on your right, near at hand, towers a cluster of superb stone pines, and between their tapering trunks are crouching two of those Capuchins of the old world who are the artist's delight and the modern-progress man's detestation. At your feet the hill slopes down abruptly, and over the roofs of mean buildings you have the open ground before the Bocca della Verità, with the little saltcellar-like "Temple of Vesta," and close to it the broad sheet of water of the old Roman landing-place at Ripa Grande. From that main reach the river winds up in a bright line to the three arches of the Ponte Rotto, and above that to the Quattro Capi and the Tiberine Island, with the arches and segments of arches which join it to the mainland on both sides, and still further up the Ponte Sisto, beyond which the stream runs up until the view is closed by the great mass of the Vatican walls, the façade and the all-seeing dome of St. Peter's ; the sky above it all a liquid pearl or faint apple-green, and behind it, where the sun has set, the waning orange of a calm Roman eveniug. On your right, if your eye can wander a little from the main visual line, you have the whole range of the city with its clustering edifices, the Farnese Palace, the Cancelleria, the Pantheon, the Castle of St. Angelo, the domes of the Gesù and Sant' Ignazio, those of San Luigi dei Francesi, of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, of San Carlo al Corso, and, as a frame to the whole, the heights of Monte Mario, with their villas and their pine trees glowing in that golden western light. On the left stretches the Trastevere with the zigzag drive to San Pietro in Montorio, and the long ridge of the Janiculus with the green fringe of the Villa Doria-Pamphili, Villa Lante, Villa Salviati and Sant' Onotrio, ending with the Vatican Garden. The description in words takes little time, and not much could be gained by dwelling upon it with long flourishes and minute details. It is the picture that must be seen or the scene itself on the spot. The picture, I believe, is not unlikely to travel to London for the exhibition. As to the scene, I asked the artist to take me to the spot that supplied him with the inspiration, and my mind, as I am writing, is still all aglow with the variety of sensations with which a two hours' rambling under his guidance has thrilled it.

We drove across town to the Palatine, and round its vast enclosure, which the Italian Government, at a great cost and with infinite care, are

converting into one of the most charming, and decidedly the most interesting, promenades in the world. We skirted the Roman Forum, and by the Via dei Fenili, with the little round church of San Teodoro on our left, the Arch of Janus Quadrifrons on our right, and the steep cliffs of the Palatine hanging over us, we came to that depression between the Palatine and the Aventine where once lay the Circo Missimo, and which slopes down to the open ground of the Bocca della Verita, the site of the ancient Velabrum, with the old church of the Bocca della Verita or Santa Maria in Cosmedin, on the extreme skirt of the hill, and the so-called Temple of Vesta and Santa Maria Egiziaca, near the river-bank. Here we clambered up the old tower of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, and scrambled up the slopes of the Aventine, to the churches of Santa Sabina, Sant' Alessio, and other claustral solitudes where monastic life clung for centuries to the cradle of the ancient city, which, without the self-denying faith of those gloomy votaries, would be its silent tomb. Dilapidated villas, neglected gardens, fortress-like enclosures of untilled grounds, ruins, waste land, and deserted habitations, with here and there a church steeple, a windmill, or other quaint landmarks, and some stray wanderer winding up the steep ascent, are all that diversifies the weird scene. In the hollows of the hill, as in the glens and among the ravines of the Val d'Inferno, in the rear of the Vatican, all round Monte Mario, and wherever the dreamy Campagna is suffered to press on the walls of the city, you have this same life-in-death, this same struggle between that desolation which claims the doomed spot as its own and that human instinct which, feeble but obstinate, survives all decay and sticks to its flag of "No surrender."

Among these lonely *débris* of the past, which has, perhaps, still a future in its womb, the artist has his favorite haunts, and dwells here with a fondness which makes him blind to the wretchedness still lingering on the devoted region, and intolerant of those steps towards improvement by which emancipated Italy would fain attempt to reanimate it with a breath of new existence. In the opinion of some cultivators and of all the critics of the Fine Arts, the Italians are only a horde of Vandals sacrilegiously sweeping from the grave of nations the sacred dust which the veneration of the priestly government allowed to accumulate upon it for centuries. They forget that it was by Popes and Popes'

sons that modern churches and palaces have been built out of the ruins of ancient baths, theaters, and circuses purposely demolished. They overlook the fact that unless Rome is to be allowed to die by inches she must be fitted for the usages, comforts, and requirements of modern life ; that, whatever interest may be attached to the cradle, whatever veneration may be due to the tomb, Rome must be a home, a living home for a nation, and must make elbow-room for the stir of a third life, whatever relic of the first and second may have to be built over and obliterated in the process.

Mr. Tilton is "a man, if you please, but an artist first." Much as he sympathizes with the national aspirations of the Italians, and loudly as he denounces the iniquities of the Papal Church and Government, he would not, if he could help it, allow one stone of the old ruins to be turned, not the wall of one of the old huts to be replastered or whitewashed. He values his picture, not so much as a masterpiece of landscape-painting, as it is, but for the importance it will have in after times as a faithful historical memorial of Rome as it was, and as, if he had his way, it should never cease to be. That Rome as it was he has in a great measure made his own property. Few men have by a quarter of a century of loving familiarity made themselves more minutely acquainted, not only with every inch of its ground and every stone of its buildings, but, what is much more, with every phase, shade, and *nuance* of its ever-changing, ever-charming atmosphere. There can be nothing more true, yet nothing more exquisitely got up, more genially idealized than this long-meditated picture of Rome from the Aventine. Though still a man in his prime of life, Mr. Tilton has reared for himself in this fine work a monument of his genius to which, I have no doubt, he will find the world disposed to do full justice.

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